

of the Commerce Committee were shut out of this process last year and the year before while our Medicare and Medicaid providers were hemorrhaging and Medicare beneficiaries across the country were suffering. The legislation we are introducing today addresses some of the most critical problems with the Balanced Budget Act, but this \$21 billion package, like last year's \$16 billion package, is woefully inadequate.

I want to thank Chairman BLILEY and Rep. DINGELL for working with me to include a provision of great importance to me, a clarification of the homebound definition for the purpose of permitting people afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease to leave the home in order to receive adult day care. This is an important amendment that will make a real difference in the lives of Alzheimer's patients and their family caregivers. However, we need to do even more to help all people who are homebound. It's not only homebound Alzheimer's patients in need of adult day care. In addition, I believe all Medicare beneficiaries who are classified as homebound should be able to get out of their homes to attend religious services or once-in-a-lifetime events like the wedding of a granddaughter or the graduation of a grandson.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago, Congress passed the so-called "Balanced Budget Act" claiming it would cut \$115 billion from Medicare and \$12 billion from Medicaid. Mr. Speaker, that \$115 billion figure has become the Energizer Bunny of Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates, it keeps growing and growing. CBOs most recent estimate from July 2000 shows that Medicare cuts now total \$230 billion. Medicare spending increased by just 1.5% in FY98, it actually went down 1% in FY99, and it remained flat in FY2000, increasing by just 1.5%.

And by some mystery Mr. Speaker, just as the amount cut from the Medicare program keeps growing, so too does the Budget surplus. The people in my district have watched in horror as local institutions—community hospitals and home health agencies—have closed their doors for good—a scene I'm sure has played out in many congressional district around the country.

Hospitals in Massachusetts will lose \$1.7 billion because of the BBA. My hometown hospital, the Malden Hospital is now an outpatient surgical center, a far cry from the fall-service hospital of my youth. The nearby Boston Regional Medical Center in Stoneham has closed. The Symmes Hospital in Arlington is closing. Others in my district are on life support. Home health agencies throughout my state have been decimated and devastated. Nursing homes are hurting as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this era of unprecedented surplus, we should be restoring \$40-50 billion over the next five years and \$80-100 billion over the next ten to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. It would be a refund of the amount we overcharged seniors in the BBA. Congress put a \$115 billion price tag on BBA, but when seniors came to the register, they were charged over \$200 billion — and we owe them a refund. I don't think that's too much to ask for our seniors, for the men and women who built this country. The surplus we enjoy today has been generated in large part by these Medicare cuts that have harmed seniors. I believe we should give this senior surplus back to the seniors, back to the programs that pay for their health care.

I am pleased that the Commerce Committee has produced a bill that deals with some of the most critical aspects of the BBA cuts. However, I am hopeful that as we move forward in the few remaining weeks of this session, that we will increase the price tag for this giveback package—\$21 billion is not going to get the job done.

#### CONGRATULATING MONTGOMERY COUNTY VETERANS OF THE NORMANDY INVASION

##### HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 26, 2000*

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate the Montgomery County, Maryland veterans who participated in the Invasion of Normandy during World War II. Many of the veterans who took part in that courageous assault have never before been recognized for their valor. This evening, I will be handing out medals at American Legion Post #268 in Wheaton, Maryland that symbolize our district and our country's thanks for their heroism on the beaches of Normandy.

Over 56 years ago, the greatest seaborne invasion the world had ever seen commenced on June 6, 1944. The German army had established a strong line of defense, and Allied forces took heavy losses but their determination and valor enabled these soldiers to persevere under the most harrowing conditions. For the next 87 days, soldiers from Montgomery County, Maryland joined forces with our allies to expel the Nazi occupiers and liberate Europe.

Their supreme efforts ultimately destroyed Nazi Germany and paved the way for democracy and freedom to spread throughout Europe and the world. Their success did not come without a price. Over 9,300 men including 33 pairs of brothers and a father and son lost their lives in the Normandy invasion. These soldiers never knew what their service meant to America and the rest of the world. They never saw America become the prosperous country that has championed the notions of liberty, democracy, and equality. They never had the opportunity to see a world that has departed from the factionalism and distrust that marred the 20th century's first fifty years. But their service is not forgotten. The medal that I am presenting today is a reminder that the people who you fought for remember your sacrifice and the sacrifice of those that did not return from Europe.

The citizens of Normandy had this medal struck to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the invasion. The Medal of the Jubilee of Liberty was originally presented to the veterans that were able to return for the 1994 ceremony. Many of the soldiers who fought there were unable to attend, and so the people of Normandy allowed these medals to be given out in an appropriate ceremony. Today, we honor the Montgomery County veterans that were instrumental in securing our freedom. Their actions not only made America the leader of the free world but demonstrated the fortitude of democratic nations in surmounting evil and tyranny and establishing peace throughout the world.

Those being recognized this evening are Nicholas Caime, Mortimer Caplin, George

Copley, Norman Creel, Louis Davids, Donald Foor, David Goldberg, Albert Gruber, John D. Fitzgerald, John Hardy, Peter Hayes, Roy Hickman, Robert Higgins, Cornelius Holden, Paul Lamb, Elroy Lovett, Thomas McDermitt, Howard J. Moore, William Perryman, Alvin Reiner, Philip Shepsle, Ira Shoemaker, John Smith, Peter Violante, and Norbert Young.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 26, 2000*

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I was detained in my district due to inclement weather yesterday and was not able to vote on rollcall No. 487. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on this vote.

#### VETERANS' FAMILY FARM PRESERVATION ACT

##### HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 26, 2000*

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, on September 25, 2000, I introduced H.R. 5271, the "Veterans' Family Farm Preservation Act", to make it possible for more wartime veterans and their survivors to qualify for pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) without being forced to sell their family farms and ranches. This legislation will also benefit low-income veterans who seek to obtain health care from VA.

The productivity of America's family farms is undisputed. Family farms and ranches feed our Nation. Family members and unpaid workers account for 70% of farm labor in the United States. While America's family farmers and ranchers are unmatched in their productivity, they have little or no control over many factors which determine the economic results of their labor.

Veterans who have gone in harm's way and placed their lives on the line by serving our nation in the Armed Forces should not be asked to relinquish their family farm in order to qualify for veterans' benefits. Unfortunately, that is what is occurring today. The Veterans' Family Farm Preservation Act addresses this problem.

Pension benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are payable to wartime veterans who are totally and permanently disabled due to a non-service connected medical condition. A small, but important number of these disabled wartime veterans own family farms or ranches, which provide the livelihood for their families. Most family farms in the United States are very small. Over 75% of family farms have less than \$50,000 in gross annual sales. After deductions for costs of operating the farm or ranch, the net income of the family farmer is much lower. Farmers receive an average of 20 cents for every dollar of produce sold. In 1995, the average net farm income for very small farms was \$510. The average net family income for small farms with gross sales between \$50,000 and \$250,000 averaged \$14,335. Clearly most family farmers have modest annual income.